fatigable dancer at fiestas. By any standard this man is old, but he certainly shows no sign of senescence, although it is unlikely he is still sexually potent. Similarly, women obviously far past child-bearing age are often the most active workers at fiestas and the most eager dancers, in contrast to the often lackadaisical attitudes of young mothers who dance not at all.

For women the menopause comes between 40 and 50. Information from women on sexual subjects is difficult to secure even by women, and the scanty information is quite unsatisfactory.[9]

Some women appear to be more or less spiritless and sad after the menopause, while others seem to be quite gay. In some cases this difference may have psychological basis or may reflect the presence or absence of physiological difficulties. Indifference of husbands, the sexual potency of husbands, and the continuance of sexual relations may also have some bearing on individual cases. At least one woman expressed herself as pleased to have passed the menopause because "now she was free" and was not dependent upon men. Further study of the problem is needed but would require considerable time and tact on the part of women investigators.

In general, whether old age is depressing and unhappy or not seems to depend upon the continuance of a successful marital relationship and the possession of adequate economic resources. The only really unhappy old people seem to be elderly women without children or husbands who eke out a miserable existence in ways that could not be discovered. They dwell in hovels and lean-tos of brush and boards, carry their own wood, and to some extent live on charity. Those with reasonable health and other dutiful children or enough property to insure care on the part of the children seem to lead a fairly satisfactory life. Often nephews and nieces also help care for old people; again, possession of property probably aids in securing

[9] Early in the study Mrs. Ruth W. Banks, of New York, aided by the nurse from the boarding school at Panajachel and by a Mestizo girl from Panajachel, tried to fill out comprehensive questionnaires on sexual subjects, directed primarily toward gaining insight into the psychological problems related to the menopause. She was able to secure only three reasonably complete schedules and even these probably contain omissions and some unanswered questions. I am indebted to Mrs. Banks for copies of the schedules and have drawn upon them slightly for these remarks.

[p.202]

proper care. But helpless old people are few in Cherán. Most old people, even though they may not perform an equal share of the labor, keep fairly active and useful.

SICKNESS AND ITS CURE

Ideas about sickness and its cure are in a state of transition in Cherán. The list of diseases is a combination of standard medical terms, sometimes misapplied, and names from traditional sources. Treatment of disease is likewise changing rapidly. Some people in town will go to a clinic in Paricho and in serious cases will send for the doctor there. For part of the time of the study a *practicante* in medicine was resident in the town (a *practicante* is a medical student who has completed all his work but has to spend 8 months in a town without a doctor and write a report on medical and health conditions before receiving his final credentials). Very few people evince any dislike for doctors; if they shun doctors it is because of the expense involved. On the other hand, most of the local curers are reticent and uncommunicative, although many of them make use of remedies purchased in the drug stores of nearby towns (Cherán has no drug store).

All the curers (*curanderas*—*kurijki*; in other towns *tsimájpiri*) located in the town were women. Usually they are middle-aged or old. In those cases where biographical data could be secured, the majority were daughters or granddaughters of curers. In some cases they had been taught, but apparently few of them used their knowledge until they became of mature years. Very few curers profess to cure all illnesses; usually they claim to cure two or three and in some cases only one. Twenty-five centavos is the usual charge for curing, whether the patient comes to the curer's house or the curer visits the patient. One curer visited had the reputation of being a "bad" witch, another a "good" witch, but generally the curers are not witches. Some rejected indignantly the idea of having anything to do with witchcraft, denying even ability to cure witchcraft. Anything to do with witchcraft is a *maloficio* and not to be touched by ordinary persons.

Ideas of sickness are varied. Injuries, such as broken bones, dislocated joints, and wounds,

Lehrb I-3 (1940-1943) 1946 NUM Tarasco NUM
[p.207 b] Tarasco Tarascan
La Cañada

755 a recently killed coyote have been placed just before the water reaches the boiling point.

Scorpion stings are treated by giving the
752 patient immediately a drink made by boiling
755 *cuaxquate* with salt. Another treatment is to give powder produced by rubbing two stones together. The powder is dissolved in water. The wound is also rubbed with lemon juice.

Rabies is treated by giving water in which
[824] has been macerated a ball of the male ash tree (male and female trees are distinguished).

Sickly children are treated by bathing them
755 with turtle blood. After a sufficient number of fresh water turtles are collected, they are made to put out the head by putting coals on the shell. The neck is then severed with a single blow of a machete, and the turtle is suspended over the head of the child (who is standing naked) so the blood streams down from head to foot.

DEATH

Death is regarded as a normal event in
761 Cherán and mourning is restrained and, in the main, private. Somewhat more grief is shown when the deceased is a child or a person still vigorous. An old person, who has begun to
[888] lose some of his vigor, is often spoken of as only half alive. Similarly, very small children are often regarded as not fully alive. For persons already regarded as not fully members of the community of the living, no great emotional response to death may be expected.

Ideas about death and afterlife are essentially
775 Catholic. Small children who die are believed to go directly to heaven, while adults must pass some time in purgatory. The dead are not particularly feared, nor is it believed that they ordinarily return. However, if a person dreams frequently of a dead relative it is believed that the deceased individual has returned for a member of his family and that one of the household will certainly die. There is no remedy for such a situation.

Because of the different beliefs regarding the
764 afterlife of children and adults, there are some differences in funerals for the two age groups.

In the case of a child, the godfather of baptism provides the burial dress, which is placed on the body by the godmother or the mother, or by the sisters of the mother. The body is not